# Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

Editor: Michael P Birks, Flixton Girls' School, Urmston, Manchester M31 3DR, England 061-747 5924 (Home)

Vol II No.27 March 1987

## PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Two important events are planned for March and April. First, on Saturday 21st March our Editor, Mike Birks, is arranging another meeting at the Conservative Club, Urmston Precinct, Manchester similar to the successful meeting the Spanish Main enjoyed last year. We look forward to a large attendance and already many interesting exhibits have been promised. To help catering arrangements will members planning to attend please write to Mike Birks at his school (address above). Buffet lunch, morning coffee and afternoon tea will be available at an all-in price of £3. Ample car parking is available in the precinct car park.

Next on Saturday 4th April the Central American Group will be holding their annual displays in the Allenby Room at the Victory Services Club. We look forward to a good attendance from all Spanish Main members. The meeting is being planned by Dr Richard Saundry who has already arranged interesting displays and would welcome offers of further help at his new address:-

Gwrych Cottage, Godstone Road, Bletchingley, Surrey RH1 4PL

Two International Exhibitions are to be held later this year - CAPEX in Toronto from 13 to 21 June and HAFNIA in Copenhagen from 16 to 25 October. I shall be glad to hear from readers planning to exhibit or to attend either or both exhibitions.

Finally I shall myself be organising an all day thematic show on behalf of the London and Provincial Stamp Club on 31st May at the Carisbrooke Hall, adjacent to the Victory Services Club. Spanish Main will be taking a table and will be staging one of the planned displays.

52 St Leonards Road
NEWTON ABBOT

John Fosbery
President, The Spanish Main

SPANISH MAIN Annual subscription £5 (UK), £6 (Europe), $15 (elsewhere) The subscription includes four copies of MAINSHEET, and also private treaty lists and auction catalogues.

Secretary: Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 3, BOURNE PE10 9RF, UK

The society also runs two specialised groups, the Central American and the Chile groups. The subscription to each group is £3 (UK) or $7 elsewhere, to Spanish Main members, or $10 to non-members (Overseas subscriptions only). This includes four copies of the respective Newsletter, by airmail.

# COSTA RICAN POSTAL STATIONERY by FINN STJERNHOLCK

Costa Rican stationery is in demand and with good reason. The issuing policy has been conservative, the printing figures are relatively small and the issues comply with postal requirements. Varied and interesting cancellations abound and include a wide range of railway postmarks (ambulantes). In the following summary the issues will be discussed in a strictly chronological order.

Costa Rica issued its first Postal Stationery items when it entered the Universal Postal Union in 1883. These were a 2c single card and a 2 + 2c double card, both intended for interior mail only. The exterior rate was 3c but oddly enough no exterior rate cards were issued. The double card is most unusual inasmuch as the message half has a blank value tablet whereas the reply half shows a "4". The manufacturer was the American Bank Note Company of New York. Both cards exist with a "Muestra" overprint, being the only Costa Rican stationery issues with a Specimen overprint. The paper is buff in two shades. 50 000 pieces were printed of the single card and a similar quantity of the double card.

TARJETA POSTAL.
U.P.U.
UNION POSTAL UNIVERSAL
ESCRÍBASE DE ESTE LADO LA DIRECCION Y LA COMUNICACION DEL OTRO.
LA OTRA TARJETA SIRVE PARA LA RESPUESTA.

Figure 1: the 2 + 2c double card

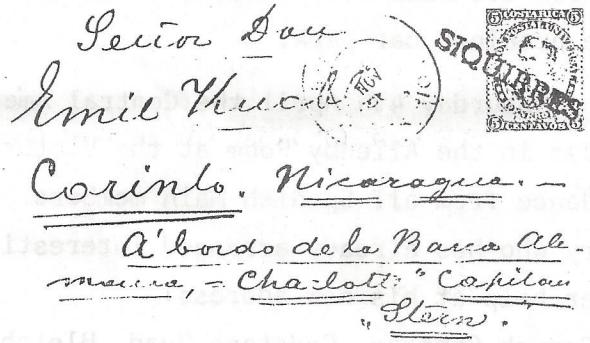


Figure 2: the 5c envelope

In 1886 a contract was made with Perkins, Bacon & Co. of London for the printing of 5c and 10c envelopes, being the single letter rate for interior and exterior mail repectively. The 5c envelopes are lithographed from a stone of six, and defects of the stone have caused some varieties such as a break in the upper frame line, broken upper left corner and others, but it has not been possible so far to determine the six positions on the sheet. The 10c envelope was recess printed, with eight items on the plate, on a heavy good quality paper. So far no varieties have been found in this value. The printing quantities were 180 000 and 75 000 respectively.

The next issue came in 1890, now printed by Waterlow & Sons of London. It consisted of a 2c card for interior mail (Figure 3), a 3c card for exterior mail, a 5c envelope for interior single weight letters and a 10c envelope for exterior letters or interior double weight letters. Further a 2c wrapper was issued, intended for sending up to 50g of printed matter overseas.

Figure 3

Of the 2c card is reported a variety with a deformation in the upper frame line. Beneath the upper flap of the envelopes is the printers embossing in two major types: Waterlow & Sons, Limited, London Wall or Waterlow & Sons, Limited, London Wall, London. The length of the embossing varies from 41 to 47·5mm in type 1, and from 45 to 55mm in type 2. The height varies from 1·5 to 2mm. Fourteen different embossing types have so far been reported. The 5c value is reported with the embossing missing. It is scarce. There have probably been several printings, the first of these on a somewhat darker paper than the later ones.

In 1903 the exterior rate for postal cards was increased from 3c to 4c. At the same time the stock of 2c cards from the 1890 issue was exhausted and the National Printing Works was ordered to overprint 20 000 pieces of the 3c cards of the same issue with "Interior - 2 centavos" and a similar quantity of the same card with "Exterior - 4 centavos". The 2c overprint is found in four different types (below).

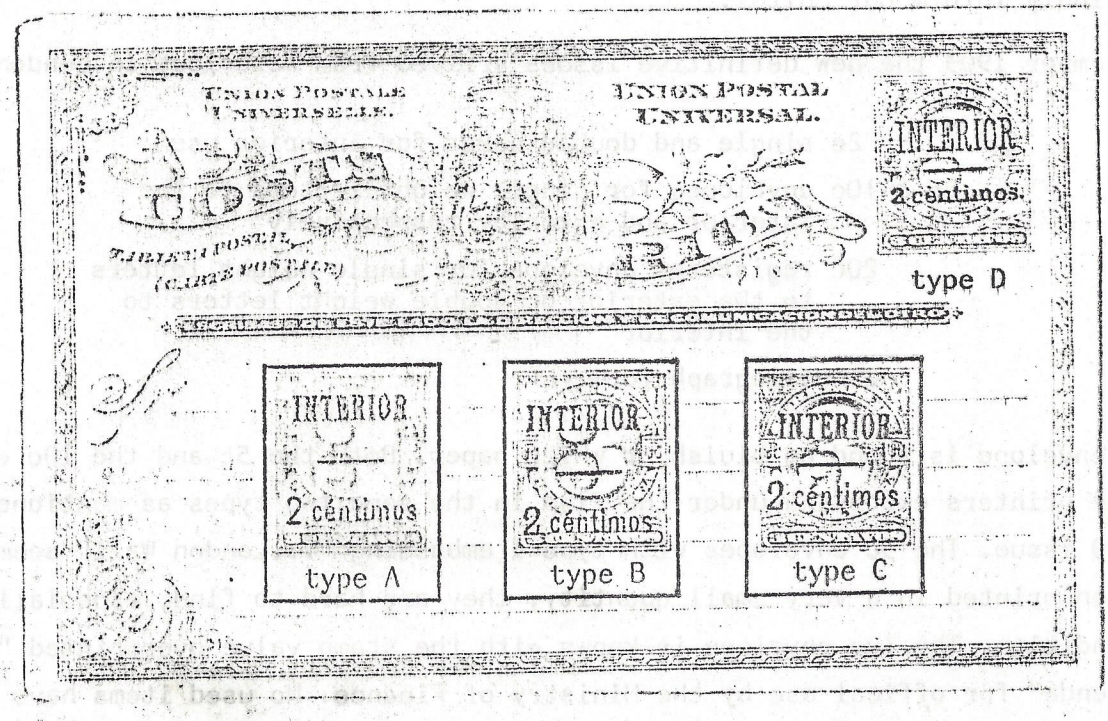


Figure 4

The 4c is found in five different types, four of which are illusrated below.

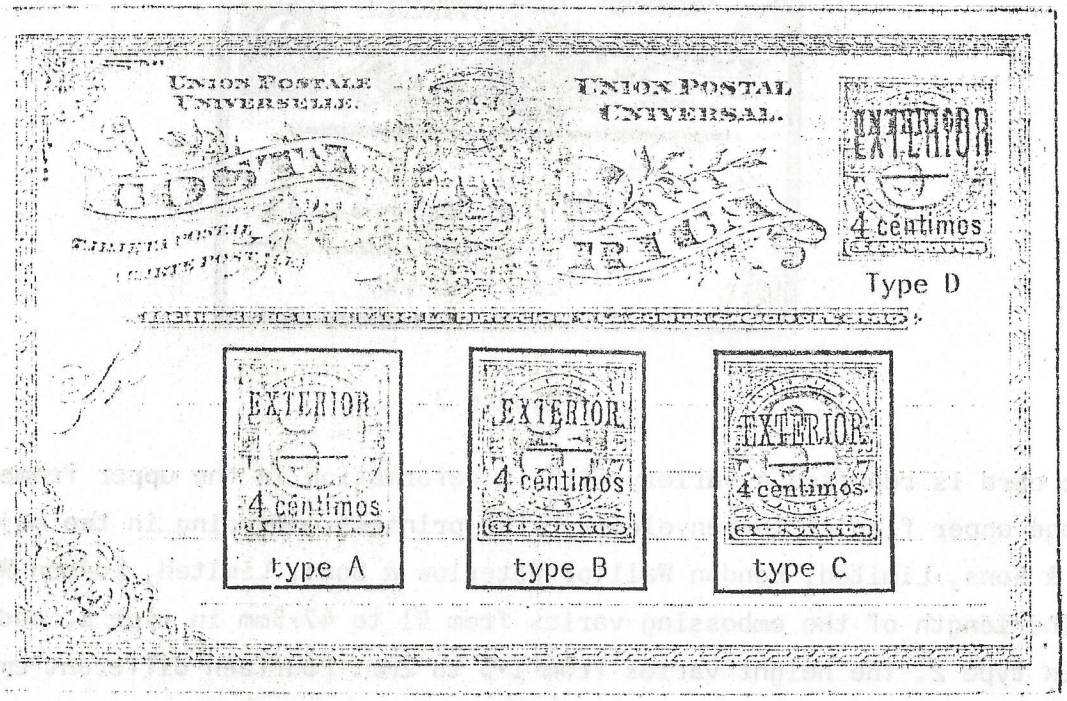


Figure 5

The types vary in the space between "Interior/Exterior" and the stamp value. Further the stamp value has either a serif or no serif at the foot of the 4. The fourth Type of the exterior rate card was by error overprinted "Interior" instead of "Exterior" and this was corrected by a new overprint "Exterior". According to the Ascher catalogue there is a fifth type of overprint of the 4c exterior card with a 16mm space between "Exterior" and "4 Centavos" with a base on the foot of the "4". The writer has never seen this card or any illustration of it. If any reader has information on this, kindly inform our Editor.

In September 1903 the new definitive issues arrived from Waterlows in London. These were:

2c single and double cards for interior use

5c & 10c envelopes for single weight letters to the interior and exterior respectively

20c registered envelope for single weight letters to the exterior or double weight letters to the interior

25c telegraph form

The 5c envelope is found on bluish or white paper. Both the 5c and the 10c envelopes have the printers embossing under the flap in the same two types as mentioned under the 1890 issue. The 5c envelopes with type 1 embossing "...London Wall" seems to have been printed in a very small quantity; they are hard to find, especially in mint condition. The 10c envelope is known with the stamp value overprinted "Secretaria de Hacienda" for offical use by the Ministry of Finance. No used items have been reported as far as is known, and probably it has to be considered as an Essay only. The 20c envelope for registration use is made on a heavy paper with linen inside.

As the weight of the envelope in itself is nearly 10g it is rather hard to find without additional postage. Of the three envelopes the 10c value is reported without having the printer's embossing. The telegraph form is rare and so far not known to the writer in used condition.

In 1906 Waterlow & Layton had taken over the printing contracts and 2c and 4c postal cards for interior and exterior mail respectively were issued. The 2c card was apparently sold out quickly; cards in mint condition are scarce. The printing quantities are not known.

In 1907 we have the second Waterlow & Layton issue, the 2c card now in green instead of brick red, and 5c and 10c envelopes. The embossing under the flap is in one type only. The rates were unchanged. According to the Higgins & Gage catalogue the 2c card has been reissued, in 1910 in blue green. This blue green card was in the collection of the well known postal stationery collector, the late Dr Gerhard Zimmer. As no similar crad has been reported, it must be regarded as a shade of the 1907 green card. The 10c envelope is found with the value stamp in blue or ultramarine indicating that there could be two printings.

In 1910 a contract was made with the American Bank Note Company, resulting in these issues:

2c single cards for interior mail
4c cards for exterior mail, and
5c & 10c envelopes, with the rates unchanged.

A 20c envelope was also issued - probably not until 1913 - succeeding the 20c registered envelope of the 1903 issue and covering the exterior single rate plus registration or the interior double weight plus registration. The envelopes are embossed under the flap with "American Bank Note Company, New York" in one type. Both the 5c and the 20c envelopes are reported with the embossing under the flap missing. The 20c envelope was made on white paper. Ascher mentions in his catalogue another 20c envelope made by Waterlow & Son on yellowish paper and issued in 1917. To the writer's knowledge no evidence has so far turned up proving the existence of this type.

In 1911 there was a new shortage of 2c cards and authorization was given to let the National Printing Works overprint 20 000 pieces of the 4c card of the 1906 issue still in stock, to be valid for 2c instead of 4c. In 1914 52 000 pieces of the same 4c card - probably the remaining stock - were revalidated by overprinting "Habilitada 1914" and the Arms, for exterior use.

In the beginning of the twenties the Government decided to use a local printer for their next issue and in 1923 Sr Lines of the Lines Press got the contract on the printing of a series of picture postal cards - in total 24 different views - being propaganda for the country and its coffee production.

The denomination was the new interior rate of 4c. According to the contract the payment was 4c for each card that was sold at the Post Office at the price of 5c, with no payment for unsold cards! Approximately 190 000 cards were printed in total. There are two major types of the address side of the card, the one with the inscription "Maria v. de Lines, San Jose" along the vertical dividing line, and the other "Colleccion A. Canalias M. Imprenta, Limon" at the same place. The printing quantities for the single cards seems to have been very unequal because some of the views are very scarce. The writer knows of no-one having all the 24 views, the most advanced collector having "only" 21 different cards. There is a red legend on the address side of the cards and varieties are found with one or more hyphens missing. Used items are scarce, especially used in the proper period.

The same year the Lines Press got the order for the printing of new 2c and 5c envelopes, the 2c representing the 50g printed matter rate and the 5c the interior single weight letter rate. The 2c envelopes were issued in 1923, the 5c probably not until the beginning of 1924. The envelopes were delivered to the Banco de Costa Rica for safekeeping for the Government and embossed on the upper flap as a control. The embossing "Banco de Costa Rica, San Jose" exists in two types, small and large. Envelopes with the small embossing are less common than the other.

In October 1924 the postal rates were increased and for that reason the usage of the last envelope issue was somewhat limited, the 2c still being the interior printed matter rate, but the 5c being the urban (drop letter) rate only. This could have been the reason that a quantity - maybe the rest of the stock - were overprinted in 1925 for official use by the Ministry of Finance. Not less than eighteen different overprints have been reported, such as "Secretaria de Hacienda - Oficial" in many types, "Secretaria de Hacienda - Servicio Oficial","Servicio Oficial","Libre de Porte" and finally an overprint consisting of three horizontal bars. Also reported is a 13c unissued envelope with a design like the 2c and 5c envelopes overprinted "Libre de Porte". These official envelopes are rather hard to find, especially used and possibly several of the overprint types are only essays. The writer has seen the 2c envelope overprinted "Libre de Porte" used in 1928 and another overprinted "Secretaria de Hacienda - Servicio Oficial" used registered in 1945 (Figure 7).

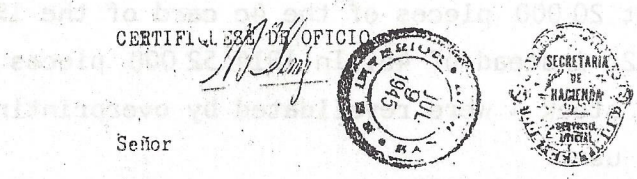


Figure 7

Under the same contract the Lines Press made a new 4c wrapper picturing a Pineapple plant, covering the 50g exterior printed matter rate. The paper is a very poor quality. Although the printing quantity is estimated to 50 000 - like the 2c and 5c envelopes - very few have survived and used items are rare.

Owing to the increases of the postal rates in 1924, (see above), there was a need for new postal cards and in 1925 cards with the following denominations were issued:

2c being the printed matter or Urban rate
5c the new interior rate
10c new exterior rate

These were printed by the Lit. Nacional (National Press), but the quantities printed are not known. There are some interesting colour shades, especially of the 5c blue card, but these are not yet classified in detail.

From about 1925 a 5c telegraph form is reported, printed on Manilla paper in brown and made by the Casa Grafica, San Jose.

In 1930 Waterlow & Sons enters the picture again with the printing of new 5c and 10c envelopes. While the 10c envelope corresponded to the interior single weight letter rate, the 5c could only be used for drop letters (Urban rate). The dies were those used for the 1903 Waterlow issue, but with colours changed to green for the 5c and carmine for the 10c envelope. Most of the envelopes have been used for overseas mail with additional postage. Printing quantities unknown so far.

Finally about 1947 air mail envelopes for official use were issued, probably locally printed. There are two sizes, standard amd large legal. There are two types of the small size envelope, one with "Secretario General" printed in the upper left corner and another without this print. The large size envelope is without this additional print. The printing quantities are not known.

From then on the issuing of postal stationery was discontinued and we have to go forward until 1978, more exactly the 11th December 1978, when a new 1 Colon envelope was issued. The design was the same used for the 1923 envelope issue, the statue of Juan Mora Fernandez, locally printed, but now in blue. This envelope covered the interior single letter rate and the printing quantity was only 25 000 pieces. On 23rd April 1979 the envelope was reissued in red with a printing quantity like the 1978 issue.

On December 10th 1982 a new 3 Colones envelope was issued, being the new interior single letter rate: the colour now green and the printing quantity increased to 100 000 pieces.

On April 25th the first Aerogramme of Costa Rica was issued. The value was C8·40, being the foreign air mail rate. The front side has a picture of an Orchid and on the back is a view of the Huetar Regional Postal centre, both in colour. The printing

quantity 50 000 pieces.

This brings us to an end with the series. Further comments and new information would be very welcome.

(Your President owns an airgraph inscribed "CORREO AEREO OFICIAL" with a design in blue of the "FLOTA de COLON". Date of issue and further details not known).

Literature:

Higgins & Gage world postal stationery catalogue
Universal Postal Union, circulars and reports
Alvaro Bonilla, Coleccion de Leyes
Otto Sieblist, Die Post in Ausland
Filatelia Costariccense, articles
"Oxcart", articles
The Costa Rican Philatelist, articles
Dr Ascher, Welt-Ganzsachen Katalog

GUATEMALA

In our Newsletter of June 1986, our President asked for the source of the Name "Guatemala". A. Recinos, in notes to the Popol Vuh suggests that Guatemala is derived from the Aztec "Quauhtlemallon" which is probably a direct translation of the Mayan "quiche" meaning "land of many trees".

C.J.B.

HONDURAS

From Honduras comes information that the Direccion General de Correos put on sale on 10th November 1986, a series of stamps designed to encourage tourism. These stamps are the first to be printed in Honduras since the August 1933 Columbus Issue. They bear the imprint "Impreso en Honduras - Cettna".

R.A.W.

SEEBECK: HERO OR VILLAIN?

We continue with our translation of Danilo Mueses' book on the life of Seebeck. We would, however, like to comment on some points raised in this section.

In issue 11, pp6-7, we illustrated some of the advertisements which are to be found on the back of the Seebeck stamps of El Salvador. We would suggest, therefore, that the final paragraph on page 7 of the translation, should read as follows;-

Blocks of nine stamps (3 x 3) of Ecuador and El Salvador are known with advertisements in English on the back, for products common in the United States at that time. It has been speculated that stamps of Nicaragua and Honduras with similar advertisements might exist.

We have found no evidence to support the suggestion (Para 2, p8), that the advertisements were printed over remainders, and indeed we feel that this is unlikely. Similarly the suggestion in paragraph 3 that the advertisements on New Zealand stamps were Seebeck's idea, we find interesting, but find hard to believe.

Schernikow, who as we have seen was his brother-in-law and very involved in all his dealings: "In 1884 he became involved with the Hamilton company". We gave this date with certainty until the great Dominican collector Ing. Luis Iglesias Molina showed us some sample cards (see fig 5) which he acquired some years ago in New York. On one of the sides appear all the Hamilton dates showing the whole range of activities and Nicholas F Seebeck is identified as "Secretary and Business Director". On the other side of the card are five stamps of the Dominican Republic series of 1880 and 1881, with and without the network. On both cards (Ing. Iglesias has two) on the stamp side written in pencil it says "Approved Dec 79".

What does "Approved 1879" mean? As those stamps were issued around November 1880, the Dominican Republic probably approved the issue around that date. Does that card date from December 1879? If so, everything which has been written and said regarding the date of the founding of the Hamilton company (see Chapter III) and about the year when Seebeck began to work at that company must be reconsidered.

Another aspect of Seebeck's relationship with the Hamilton company which has not been totally clarified was his position. On the card in question we have seen him as Secretary and Business Director? On the contracts which he signed with El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua he appears as "Secretary".

In spite of the key role which has been attributed to Seebeck as the supplier of stamps for the Dominican Republic and the department of Bolivar from 1886-1888, he was principally a stamp vendor who published half page advertisements in "The Philatelic Journal of America" offering his merchandise.

By 1890 we find Seebeck as President of the Hamilton company; however in other documents he appears as its "general manager" or as "agent". It is consequently unknown what was the exact nature of his position in that business and in what year he fulfilled each of his roles.

It seems, however, that there was a public and another private position between the Hamilton company and Seebeck, for although he signed the contracts as secretary, the company then transfered the contracts to Seebeck individually and he in his turn made a contract with the company to engrave and print the stamps. When the strongest attacks began they were directed at Seebeck rather than the Hamilton company as if everyone understood that they were not one and the same.

Another somewhat uncertain point in Seebeck's life, especially if as Schernikow says, he began with the Hamilton company in 1884, is how he negotiated the contracts with the Dominican Republic in 1879/80 and the Bolivar department in 1879-85. It has not been explained how his roles with the Hamilton company could be reconciled with his role as J W Scott's agent and even as an independent vendor of stamps.

Seebeck gained notoriety for the contracts he organised with El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Ecuador, for the supply of stamps which he supplied without any charge to those countries, on condition that at the end of the year they returned to him the devalued remainder for him to sell to collectors.

He was a very restless person and tried out a variety of experiments, but they were always related to stamps. In the last century, the stamped envelopes in use in the United States had the vignette enclosed in an oval shape. In 1864 George F Nesbitt, an envelope manufacturer from the United States had the idea of overprinting these envelopes with his name and address around that vignette. He offered them to the Senate and the House of Representatives and for his own use. Although the idea did not flourish, years later Seebeck used the said idea on envelopes which he used in his correspondence. Envelopes with the inscription "N F Seebeck/97 Wall Street, New York" around the printed stamp are known.

Another of his efforts was to try and sell space on the back of stamps to put advertisements.

Blocks of nine stamps (3 x 3) of Ecuador and Honduras are known with advertisements in English on the back, for products common in the United States at that time. It has been speculated that stamps of El Salvador and Honduras with similar advertisements must exist.

On those stamps, Seebeck made use of an idea already used in New Zealand on their stamps of 1882-91, but the destination he intended for the stamps is not very clear. It has been pointed out quite rightly that if the advertisements were distributed for the natives of Ecuador and Honduras, they should have advertised products of those countries and not "Adams chewing gum" or "Kennedy biscuits" and they should have been in Spanish.

Harris (1981) has pointed out that the announcements are printed over remainders and that the manoeuvre was a trick to find an outlet for the stamps or to try to sell the stamps as part of a sales campaign to the makers of the products.

Such has been the speculation that Cabeen put forward the idea that the advertisements on the New Zealand stamps was Seebeck's own idea and that on putting advertisements on the stamps of Ecuador and Honduras he was not copying the ideas of others, but trying to widen the radius of action.

Seebeck, however, was a great collector of stamps. His interest was centred on the stamps of the old German States and besides he had a magnificent collection of the stamps of the Confederated States of America which reached a high price on sale after Seebeck's death.

Seebeck died on 23 June 1899 when the majority of his contracts had expired and the wave of rejection of his issues was hardly felt. He was barely 42. His brother-in-law Ernest Schernikow was named executor of his estate.

In relation to the date of his death, Schernikow and other authors give 23 June 1900, but he actually died on 23 June 1899 according to the July 1899 obituary published in "The Philatelic Monthly and World" vol 25, no 7, page 62.

The registers of the Hamilton company show that in 1940 a son of N F Seebeck called August C Seebeck was vice president of the company.

## Chapter III

## THE HAMILTON BANK NOTE CO.

The Hamilton Bank Note Co seems indissolubly bound to Seebeck so much that it has been pointed out that on one occasion or another he was its general manager, agent, secretary or president according to the needs of the moment.

The origin of the Hamilton is as obscure as that of Seebeck himself. Dr Clarence W Hennan in his work on the issues of the Dominican Republic studies the origin of the Bank, pointing out:-

> "The new series is shown to have been produced in New York by the Hamilton Bank Note Co (referring to the series of 1880 of the Dominican Republic). With reference to the issue of 1879, in 1906 Phillips points out, 'the authorisation for this new issue was in New York and the contract was obtained by Mr N F Seebeck'. At the same time Phillips lists the stamps of the issue of 1880 as 'Printed in New York by the Hamilton Bank Note Co '.
>
> However as recently as in 1922, Gibbons Catalogue lists the issue of 1880 as 'Lithographed and printed by the Manhattan Bank Note Co New York'.
>
> The facts are that the Hamilton Bank Note Co. began its operations in 1882 (at 61 Broadway) and therefore could not have printed the issue of 1880 or that of 1879."

Later, Speaking of Seebeck, he points out:-

> "In 1885 he was 'secretary' at 1 Broadway, the address which from 1884 was also that of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. Between 1879 and 1883 the Manhattan Bank Note Co does not appear but in 1879 and not after 1880 in 542 Pearl Street was situated a Manhattan Photo Engraving Co..

> After the Stamps of 1880 in the Dominican Republic two series of post cards were published. In Scott's Catalogues (1895 etc) the year 1881 is given as the date of issue of these cards which was also the date of the first envelopes with the printed stamps. On these latter, the stamps which were printed have the same design as the adhesive stamps; on the post cards the stamp is oval with the value at each side. One of the series of cards was evidently intended for home use. The other series had inscriptions in Spanish and French which showed that these were intended for use within the UPU. Just below the lower border at the front these UPU stamps bear an imprint which reads "The Manhattan Bank Note Co New York.
>
> In the 'Collector's Club Philatelist' of January 1946 (p31), Clarence W Brazer mentions a Manhattan Engraving Co (situated at 71 Broadway, New York, in 1867) which in 1881 produced post cards for the Dominican Republic and certain postage stamps. In 1867 its treasurer was the well-known engraver, George W Thurber, who was later an official of the Hamilton Bank Note Co. The only Bank Note companies registered in 1880 in New York were the American, the Franklin, the Homer Lee and the Kendall. If the stamps of 1880 were printed by a 'Bank Note' company of New York it follows that it is one of these four unless they were made by a 'Manhattan' Bank Note or (Photo) Engraving Co. There seems no connection between the 'Manhattan' and the Hamilton Bank Note Co, were it not for the fact that Thurber was an official of the first before being a founder of the second."

So much for the quotation from Hennan; we shall go over the subject again later on.

In an article by Leo J Harris on the Hamilton and Seebeck it is pointed out that the firm was originally situated at 88 and 90 Gold Street in Brooklyn and moved from there (though the year is not definitely stated) to 61 Broadway Street in Manhattan. Harris also notes that in 1884 it is changed to the Hamilton Bank Note and Engraving Co, though we are inclined to believe that the change of name was made earlier.

The "Bank Notes" were one series of businesses which flourished in the USA in the second half of the last century which, contrary to what their name might suggest, were not banks but businesses devoted to the printing of bank notes, bonds, postage stamps and other security documents. They came into prominence by their dealings taking over part of the substantial market in printing stamps which was becoming a monopoly of the National Bank Note Co at first and later of the American Bank Note Co. This last company for almost 75 years dominated a great part of the market in printing stamps in all Latin America and even extended into Europe.

The productions of the Hamilton Bank Note Co as far as the quality of the printing is concerned, were of a high standard. It was this company which printed all the stamps produced under Seebeck's contracts. However, though it seems strange, during the entire last century the only other stamps as far as we know, which were printed by the Hamilton, were the series of 1879/81 of the Dominican Republic and those of the State of Bolivar of 1879/85.

On a sales card which is illustrated in figure 6, the company announces itself as steel plate engravers, printers of bank notes, postage stamps, revenue stamps, railway tickets, bonds, stock exchange certificates, bills of exchange, deposit certificates, cheques, postal orders, diplomas, card headings, insurance policies, calendars, portraits, business cards, labels, bill headings etc.

This card just as we pointed out in Chapter II has on the other side the stamps of the Dominican Republic of 1880/81 and a note in pencil which says "Approved Dec 1879" which seems to indicate that, contrary to the information on the authority of Dr Hennan, the Hamilton was already established in 1879.

It appears that the Hamilton, with Seebeck dead and its contracts rescinded, fell into disrepute and all the doors to the outside world closed for it. In the present century we only know that it was in charge of four series, two of them of the Dominican Republic, one of Panama and one of Honduras.

Of these two series printed for the Dominican Republic, the first was the series of the Mapita (Scott No 111/17) issued in 1901 which was plagued with intentional mistakes such as the inscriptions "Atlantic Ocean" and "Caribbean Sea" being transposed, the map of the Dominican Republic upside down and the 50 cent stamp with the inscription "five" instead of "fifty".

The other series of the Dominican Republic printed by the Hamilton was the issue commemorating the 400th anniversary of the Foundation of the State of San Domingo (Scott No 144/50) put in circulation on 25 February 1902. In this issue six of the seven values of which the series consists appear with the centre inverted and all the values come imperforate. The contract for printing both series was negotiated with the Dominican Republic by Señor José María Giordani who at that time was acting as Consul of Guatemala in the Dominican Republic.

The contract for printing this second issue was clear cut "Seebeckian" since the Government of the Dominican Republic did not pay for the stamps and undertook to deliver to Giordani at the end of the validity of the issue which was only for three months, $5,000 face value of stamps and the balance which had not been sold by 31 May 1902. Given the reduction of postal activity in the country, they were well publicised to the extent that in 1903 through advertisements published in "L'Echo de la Timbrologie" and other European publications, 22,000 complete sets of the issue were offered.

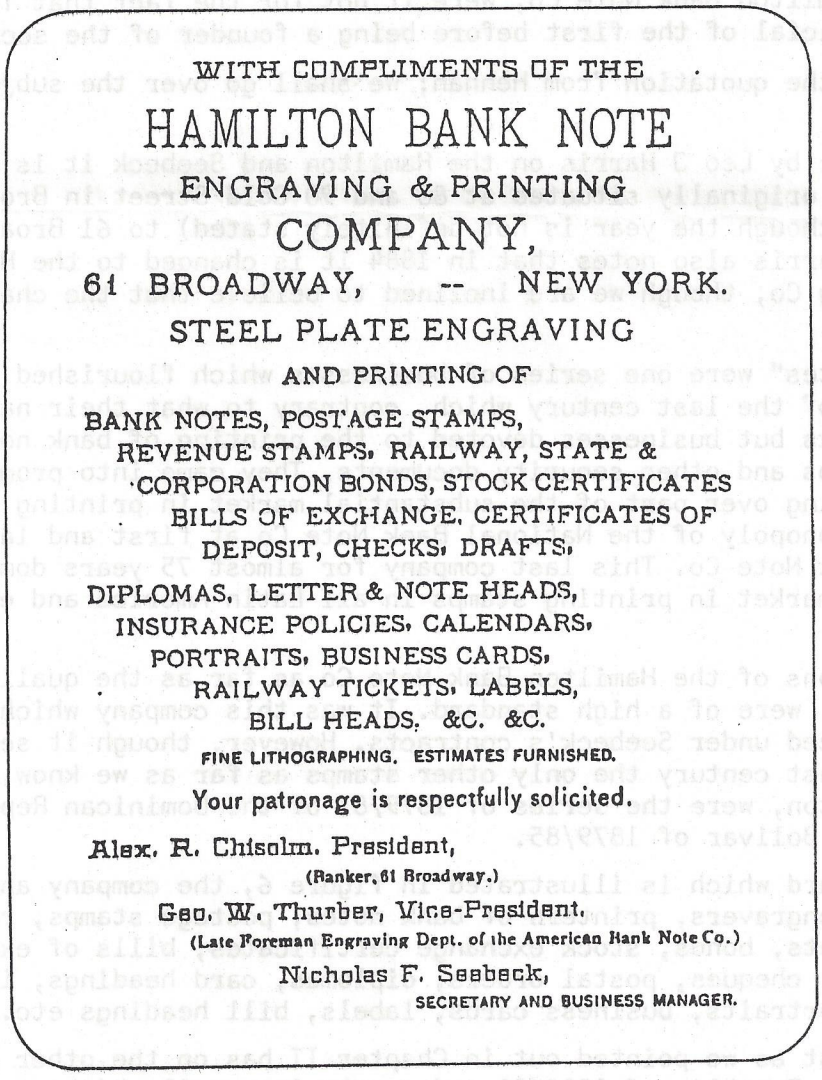


Figure 6. The back of the card shown in fig 5, which lists the services of the Hamilton. Seebeck appears to be both Secretary and Business Manager.

Giordani was without doubt such a "bird of evil spots" that finally on 23 January 1904 the President of the Dominican Republic, C Morales Languasco, was obliged to cancel his tour of office as consul of Guatemala and Costa Rica.

And as for the mistakes of these two issues, all are of a money-making kind, which shows that the people who managed the Hamilton after the death of Seebeck, had learnt the lesson well.

Another series of stamps printed by the Hamilton was one which it made for the Government of Panama in 1906. The series consisted of nine values, all of which appear with the centre inverted and imperforate. Concerning the issue, the Scott Catalogue points out:-

> " The values of the issue for the most part appear with the centre inverted and imperforate, but it is not known if these stamps were regularly issued."

Faced with the fact that it was produced four years after the inverted centres and imperforate stamps of the Dominican Republic, we must realise that "a dog may lose his teeth but not his talents".

The Hamilton however, continued working and after its last venture in Panama we know of only one series which was printed for Honduras in 1946 (Scott No C155/62) but this was in a more serious vein.

In 1951 the Hamilton was dissolved, the firm being taken over by the Security Bank Note Co, a Philadelphia firm.

## Chapter IV

## THE MISSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The matter seemed both simple and innocent: A group of Latin American impoverished nations, unable to produce issues of postage stamps of an acceptable quality locally. They would be offered supplies of an annual issue of beautifully printed stamps at no cost on the sole condition that at the end of the issue the remainders (which the promoter would take responsibility for collecting in) should be returned to the printer. These remainders would be used for sale to collectors at low prices. For those who preferred cancelled stamps, they could be supplied in that condition.

Ultimately everyone would be a winner; the countries which signed contracts would receive their stamps at no cost; the promoter for the sole cost of printing the stamps would acquire enormous quantities of legitimate stamps and the collectors would have the opportunity of acquiring at low prices the beautiful multicoloured series so attractive to the young.

Whose idea was it? It has been attributed to Seebeck but before him it seems there there were forerunners. Hardy and Bacon (1896) wrote:

> " Guatemala in 1886 accepted the offer of a certain Mr Charles Parker, a civil engineer, to provide, at no cost, two million stamps of a new design, on the understanding that they would hand back the remainders of all the old issues. The cost of the new issue for the entrepreneur engineer must not have been significant, and shows that there are great benefits in this type of transaction."

The series of stamps to which Hardy and Bacon refer is Scott 31-41 designed by Dr E León and printed by lithographic methods by the American Bank Note Co. It seems however that the American company had nothing to do with the stamps and only fulfilled the printing order.

It was in the year 1889 that Seebeck began his tour of Central America. For that journey Schernikow gave him a series of letters of introduction to various officials of the governments he proposed to visit.

Seebeck set off at the beginning of 1889 and the first country he visited was Guatemala where he was unsuccessful. Then he made his way to El Salvador, a country with which he signed the first of his contracts for a ten year agreement. Then he went to Honduras where he acquired another ten year contract; from there he made his way across to Costa Rica but there he was unable to sign any contract and so he set off for Nicaragua.

The contract with Nicaragua was not signed until 4 May 1889.

In the following chapters we will study the contracts, and the issues which resulted from these contracts.

With regard to the inventory which we shall make of Seebeck's issues, we must point out that the field of study of these stamps with their varieties of paper, shades, errors, different printings and above all knowledge of the differences between the originals and the reprints is so great that it is beyond the scope of this work, which is directed more towards the study of Seebeck the man and the influence of the "Seebeck phenomenon" on the philately of his era and the long term effects of his issues.

## Chapter V

## THE SEEBECKS OF EL SALVADOR

Seebeck's first contract was with El Salvador and this was one of the last countries to terminate the agreement.

The contract was signed on 27 March 1889 and our Spanish translation is from the English version which appeared in the "Philatelic Magazine" of 14 February 1931.

1 - Nicolas F Seebeck as representative of the above named company (The Hamilton Bank Note Co) promises to supply, without any cost to the postal services of El Salvador, the quantities of stamps which may be necessary for the postal services and which will be determined accordingly from now on, for a period of 10 successive years, beginning on the date of the present contract, in accordance with the design which the General Manager will provide on 1 April each year, on the understanding that the issue for each twelve month period will be so totally different from those in the preceding period, whilst the type adopted for each year's series of issues should be uniform.

2 - The stamps will be engraved on steel plates in the most artistic form and in such a way that forgery will be impossible, in the following quantities which can be increased according to the needs of the postal services if it is necessary to do so.

1 500 000 stamps of 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 20, 25 and 50 centavos and $1.00

10 000 postcards of 2, 2+2, 3+3 centavos

25 000 envelopes with stamps of 5, 10, 11, 20 and 22 centavos

10 000 newspaper wrappers of 3, 6, 12½ and 25 centavos

3 - The postal issues must be handed over free of faults by the Company to the representative of El Salvador in New York, on 15 September each year which precedes that for which they are intended with the express condition that before the said delivery is effected, and immediately upon completion of the print run of the issues for which they have been used, the printing plates of postal issues sealed by the Representative of El Salvador and of the Company will be depositied in the Safe Deposit Company of New York, from whose safekeeping they cannot be removed except in fulfilment of the conditions stated hereafter.

4 - It is understood that the company cannot make, of the issues which it prepares for the end of each year, greater quantities than those stated in the instructions received to such effect from the General Manager with the authority of the Supreme Government, and that these quantities will conform literally with the nature of the said instructions in relation to the colours of each value and the design.

5 - The Government for its part agrees to have prepared by the Director General of the Post Office, the models and instructions necessary for the company to fulfil its commitments, obliging them to have both in the hands of the company in the month and on the day indicated in Article 1 of each year which precedes that for which the new issue must be put into circulation.

6 - In compensation for the expenditure made by the company for engraving and supplying the said postal issues, the Supreme Government of El Salvador agrees to hand over to the company the stock which, at the end of each year, may be in its possession, once they have been declared nul and void on the first of January whatever the quantity which remains, promising furthermore not to sell stamps or any of the other aforementioned issues, for less than their face value whilst in use.

7 - The stock will be handed over at no cost, by the Government of El Salvador to Mr Seebeck's representative in this capital on 1 February each year until the end of the present agreement.

8 - Once the representative of El Salvador has been informed by the Superior Government, that the issues of each successive year have been declared nul and unacceptable for the payment of postage, and has given notice to that effect to the engraving company, the latter will be able to remove from its aforementioned safe deposit the plates for the postal issues, and break in the presence of the representative the seals mentioned in Article 3, so that the plates may be used to make whatever reprints that the engraving company may require

9 - It is understood that the issues for each year whill be handed over in El Salvador, 30 days before the date of usage.

10 - As an exception, the remainders left on 31 December of the present year of the 1 and 2 centavos value stamps recently ordered from the American Bank Note Company of New York will not pass into the hands of the Hamilton Company, whatever the handover date may be, until 31 December 1890, so that the issue, which the company will have listed in November, according to the terms of the contract, will comprise only for the present year a series of stamps of 3, 5, 10, 20, 25 and 50 centavos and $1.00, the other issues being printed in accordance with the quantity determined in Article 2 of the present agreement.

11 - In order to avoid as far as possible all the difference which might arise between the contracting parties in relation to the terms of some of the preceding clauses the company is obliged to interpret the same in favour of the interests of El Salvador.

12 - The agreement may be renewed by mutual consent of the Superior Government of El Salvador and the Hamilton Engraving Company, but in the case of one or the other, or if both contracting parties consider it advantageous it can be cancelled by giving a year's notice to the representative of El Salvador in New York and to the company's representative in this city, in accordance with the instructions that the said representative receives from the Superior Government of the Republic and the Manager of the printing company.

In testimony of which we sign two copies with the same content, in El Salvador on 27 March 1889.

Salvador J Carazo
Director General of Postal Services, El Salvador

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving Company
N F Seebeck, Secretary

The First Series

The first series printed by the Hamilton Company for El Salvador was issued on 1 January 1890 and corresponds to the stamps Scott No 38-46. For the printing of the stamps the same vignette was used as had been used in the stamps printed three years before for an issue which had been entrusted to the American Bank Note Company and which represents an allegory of El Salvador. It consists of the following stamps:-

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1c | green | 2c | yellowish brown | 3c | yellow |
| 5c | blue | 10c | violet | 20c | orange |
| 25c | red | 50c | claret | 1 | peso carmine |

For this first issue, the Director General of Postal Services, Salvador J Carazo sent a letter which was published in the September edition of the "Philatelic Journal of America", in which the quantities of each value to be produced are announced. According to that letter the quantities would be the following:-

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3c | 450 000 | 5c | 450 000 | 10c | 250 000 |
| 20c | 150 000 | 25c | 100 000 | 50c | 85 000 |
| | | $1 | 15 000 | | |

This is one of the few issues for which the quantities issued and sent to the country are known, for Seebeck for all the issues, whichever country was involved, always kept all those figures very secret.

According to what is manifest in the contract in that first issue there should not have been 1 and 2 centavos stamps. Schernikow in his article indicates that in fact the order was not for 1·5 million stamps, but for 1 635 000 and as for the 1 and 2c stamps, at the time of the signing of the contract they had already been ordered from the American Bank Note Co and on receiving them it was found that they were inadequate for use and so 500 000 stamps of each of the two values were ordered from the Hamilton, which caused the order to rise to 2 635 000 stamps.

They were recess printed and perforated 12.

The stamps were hardly circulated and are much more common mint than used. The Scott catalogue of 1978 quotes the new series at $1.62 and $6.19 used, with genuine cancels. This situation occurs in all the Seebeck issues of El Salvador where the genuinely used stamps are more scarce and costly than the mint.

In relation to this issue Harlow says (1942), "at the end of the first year 445 000 stamps of 1 centavo and 504 000 of the two centavos of the said country were returned to his control", although there is something which does not quite add up if it is correct as Schernikow says that there were only 500 000 2 centavos stamps. However, Seebeck began to receive the remainders of previous issues much earlier, fulfilling the terms of Article VI of the Contract already cited.

Thus we see that in the 10 April 1890 issue of "The American Philatelist" the following official dispatch transcribed:-

GOVERNMENT PALACE
San Salvador, 3 December 1889

As a result of the new issue of stamps, envelopes postcards and newspaper bands which are now ready, the Executive Authority orders:-

1 - From 1 January 1890 the country's post offices must not accept as payment for the franking of newspapers and letters, the stamps of the new issue which appeared on 27 March 1889.